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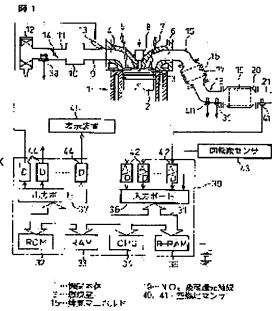
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(54) CATALYST DETERIORATION DETERMINING DEVICE FOR INTERNAL COMBUSTION ENGINE

(57)Abstract:

PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED: To correctly determine degree of deterioration of NOxocclusion reduction catalyst.

SOLUTION: In an exhaust passage in an internal combustion engine in which an air-fuel ratio in a combustion chamber 3 is set to be lean, NOx occlusion reduction catalyst 19 for accumulating NOx in inflow exhaust gas when the air-fuel ratio in the inflow exhaust gas is lean, and emitting the accumulated NOx for reduction when oxygen concentration in the inflow exhaust gas is lowered is disposed. When NOx is to be emitted from the NOx occlusion reduction catalyst 19, the air-fuel ratio of mixed gas to be burnt in a combustion chamber 3 is



temporarily set rich. Time from when the air-fuel ratio of the exhaust gas flowing into the NOx occlusion reduction catalyst 19 turns not to be lean till when the air-fuel ratio of the exhaust gas die chased from the NOx occlusion catalyst 19 becomes rich is detected. The time is corrected based on NOx occlusion reduction catalyst temperature, intake air quantity, NOx storage quantity, etc., when the air-fuel ratio of the inflow exhaust becomes rich, and the corrected time is compared with a reference value, thereby degree of deterioration of the NOx occlusion reduction catalyst 19 is determined.

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CLAIMS

[Claim(s)]

[Claim 1] In the flueway of the internal combustion engine with which it was made for the air-fuel ratio in a combustion chamber to serve as Lean When the air-fuel ratio of inflow exhaust air is Lean, it is NOX under inflow exhaust air. NOX which is stored, and is stored if the oxygen density under inflow exhaust air falls NOX emitted and returned An occlusion reduction catalyst is arranged. NOX An occlusion reduction catalyst to NOX It is NOX when it should emit. It is a reducing-agent feeder to NOX so that the air-fuel ratio of the inflow exhaust air to an occlusion reduction catalyst may become rich. A reducing agent is supplied to an occlusion reduction catalyst. It is NOX after starting the reducing-agent supply operation by the reducing-agent feeder. After the air-fuel ratio of the inflow exhaust air to an occlusion reduction catalyst stops being Lean NOX Elapsed time until the air-fuel ratio of the outflow exhaust air from an occlusion reduction catalyst becomes rich is detected. In the catalyst de-activation decision equipment of the internal combustion engine which judged the degradation degree of a NOX occlusion reduction catalyst by comparing the reference value beforehand determined as this elapsed time Engine operational status or NOX at the time of the reducing-agent supply operation by the reducing-agent feeder, or the reducing-agent supply onset of action Based on the condition of an occlusion reduction catalyst, at least one side is amended among elapsed time and a reference value. It is NOX by comparing the elapsed time and the reference value after amendment. Catalyst de-activation decision equipment of the internal combustion engine which judged the degradation degree of an occlusion reduction catalyst. [Claim 2] Catalyst de-activation decision equipment of the internal combustion engine according to claim 1 which amended elapsed time or a reference value based on the temperature of the NOX occlusion reduction catalyst at the time of the reducing-agent supply onset of action by the reducingagent feeder.

[Claim 3] NOX of the NOX occlusion reduction catalyst at the time of the reducing-agent supply onset of action by the reducing-agent feeder Catalyst de-activation decision equipment of the internal combustion engine according to claim 1 which amended elapsed time or a reference value based on the quantity to be stored.

[Claim 4] It is NOX at the time of the reducing-agent supply operation by the reducing-agent feeder. Catalyst de-activation decision equipment of the internal combustion engine according to claim 1 which the reducing-agent amount of supply is controlled so that the air-fuel ratio of the inflow exhaust air to an occlusion reduction catalyst turns into a setting air-fuel ratio defined beforehand, and amended elapsed time or a reference value based on this setting air-fuel ratio.
[Claim 5] In the flueway of the internal combustion engine with which it was made for the air-fuel ratio in a combustion chamber to serve as Lean When the air-fuel ratio of inflow exhaust air is Lean, it is NOX under inflow exhaust air. NOX which is stored, and is stored if the oxygen density under inflow exhaust air falls NOX emitted and returned An occlusion reduction catalyst is arranged. NOX An occlusion reduction catalyst to NOX It is NOX when it should emit. It is a reducing-agent feeder to NOX so that the air-fuel ratio of the inflow exhaust air to an occlusion reduction catalyst may

become rich. A reducing agent is supplied to an occlusion reduction catalyst. It is NOX after starting the reducing-agent supply operation by the reducing-agent feeder. After the air-fuel ratio of the inflow exhaust air to an occlusion reduction catalyst stops being Lean NOX Elapsed time until the

air-fuel ratio of the outflow exhaust air from an occlusion reduction catalyst becomes rich is

detected. In the catalyst de-activation decision equipment of the internal combustion engine which judged the degradation degree of a NOX occlusion reduction catalyst by comparing the reference value beforehand determined as this elapsed time Engine operational status or NOX at the time of the reducing-agent supply operation by the reducing-agent feeder, or the reducing-agent supply onset of action It judges whether the condition of an occlusion reduction catalyst is an established state defined beforehand. It is NOX by comparing elapsed time and a reference value in case this condition is an established state. Catalyst de-activation decision equipment of the internal combustion engine which judged the degradation degree of an occlusion reduction catalyst.

[Translation done.]

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DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[Detailed Description of the Invention]

[0001]

[Field of the Invention] This invention relates to an internal combustion engine's catalyst deactivation decision equipment.

[0002]

[Description of the Prior Art] Receive the fuel quantity and the amount of reducing agents which were supplied in the upstream flueway, the combustion chamber, and the inhalation-of-air path rather than a certain location in an engine flueway. If the ratio of the air content supplied in the upstream flueway, the combustion chamber, and the inhalation-of-air path rather than the location is called the air-fuel ratio of the exhaust air in the location In the flueway of the internal combustion engine with which it was made for the air-fuel ratio in a combustion chamber to serve as Lean from the former When the air-fuel ratio of inflow exhaust air is Lean, it is NOX under inflow exhaust air. NOX which is stored, and is stored if the oxygen density under inflow exhaust air falls NOX emitted and returned An occlusion reduction catalyst is arranged. NOX An occlusion reduction catalyst to NOX It is NOX when it should emit. It is a reducing-agent feeder to NOX so that the air-fuel ratio of the inflow exhaust air to an occlusion reduction catalyst may become rich. The internal combustion engine which supplied the reducing agent to the occlusion reduction catalyst is well-known. [0003] NOX Even if the air-fuel ratio of the inflow exhaust air to an occlusion reduction catalyst is made rich, it is NOX of a NOX occlusion reduction catalyst. It is NOX while emission / reduction operation is performed. It is mostly maintained by theoretical air fuel ratio, and, subsequently the airfuel ratio of the outflow exhaust air from an occlusion reduction catalyst is NOX. NOX of an occlusion reduction catalyst Completion of emission / reduction operation checks that the air-fuel ratio of outflow exhaust air changes richly. Therefore, it is NOX after starting the reducing-agent supply operation by the reducing-agent feeder. Elapsed time after the air-fuel ratio of the inflow exhaust air to an occlusion reduction catalyst stops being Lean until the air-fuel ratio of the outflow exhaust air from a NOX occlusion reduction catalyst becomes rich is NOX. NOX of an occlusion reduction catalyst It is NOX, if storage capacity is expressed and it says conversely. The degradation degree of an occlusion reduction catalyst will be expressed.

[0004] Then, it is NOX by comparing the reference value which detected this elapsed time and was beforehand determined as elapsed time. The catalyst de-activation decision equipment of the internal combustion engine which judged the degradation degree of an occlusion reduction catalyst is well-known (refer to JP,10-299469,A).

[0005]

[Problem(s) to be Solved by the Invention] However, elapsed time is the engine operational status at the time of the reducing-agent supply operation by the reducing-agent feeder, or the reducing-agent supply onset of action, or NOX. It may change according to the condition of an occlusion reduction catalyst. Namely, NOX at the time of the reducing-agent supply onset of action according to a reducing-agent feeder for example NOX of an occlusion reduction catalyst When there are few quantities to be stored, compared with many times, elapsed time becomes short. However, I hear that elapsed time is only short, and it is NOX. It will be incorrect-judged that it is judged that the degradation degree of an occlusion reduction catalyst became large.

[0006] Therefore, the purpose of this invention is NOX. It is in offering the catalyst de-activation

decision equipment of the internal combustion engine which can judge the degradation degree of an occlusion reduction catalyst correctly.

[0007]

[Means for Solving the Problem] In order to solve the above-mentioned technical problem, according to the 1st invention, in the flueway of the internal combustion engine with which it was made for the air-fuel ratio in a combustion chamber to serve as Lean When the air-fuel ratio of inflow exhaust air is Lean, it is NOX under inflow exhaust air. NOX which is stored, and is stored if the oxygen density under inflow exhaust air falls NOX emitted and returned An occlusion reduction catalyst is arranged. NOX An occlusion reduction catalyst to NOX It is NOX when it should emit. It is a reducing-agent feeder to NOX so that the air-fuel ratio of the inflow exhaust air to an occlusion reduction catalyst may become rich. A reducing agent is supplied to an occlusion reduction catalyst. It is NOX after starting the reducing-agent supply operation by the reducing-agent feeder. After the air-fuel ratio of the inflow exhaust air to an occlusion reduction catalyst stops being Lean NOX Elapsed time until the air-fuel ratio of the outflow exhaust air from an occlusion reduction catalyst becomes rich is detected. It is NOX by comparing the reference value beforehand determined as this elapsed time. In the catalyst de-activation decision equipment of the internal combustion engine which judged the degradation degree of an occlusion reduction catalyst Engine operational status or NOX at the time of the reducing-agent supply operation by the reducing-agent feeder, or the reducing-agent supply onset of action Based on the condition of an occlusion reduction catalyst, at least one side is amended among elapsed time and a reference value. It is NOX by comparing the elapsed time and the reference value after amendment. He is trying to judge the degradation degree of an occlusion reduction catalyst. Namely, engine operational status at the time of a reducing-agent supply operation or the reducing-agent supply onset of action in the 1st invention or NOX It is not concerned with the condition of an occlusion reduction catalyst, but is NOX. The degradation degree of an occlusion reduction catalyst is judged correctly.

[0008] Moreover, NOX [according to the 2nd invention] at the time of the reducing-agent supply onset of action according [on the 1st invention and] to a reducing-agent feeder He is trying to amend elapsed time or a reference value based on the temperature of an occlusion reduction catalyst. Namely, NOX at the time of the reducing-agent supply onset of action in the 2nd invention It is not concerned with the temperature of an occlusion reduction catalyst, but is NOX. The degradation degree of an occlusion reduction catalyst is judged correctly.

[0009] Moreover, NOX [according to the 3rd invention] at the time of the reducing-agent supply onset of action according [on the 1st invention and] to a reducing-agent feeder NOX of an occlusion reduction catalyst He is trying to amend elapsed time or a reference value based on a quantity to be stored. Namely, NOX at the time of the reducing-agent supply onset of action in the 3rd invention NOX of an occlusion reduction catalyst It is not concerned with a quantity to be stored, but is NOX. The degradation degree of an occlusion reduction catalyst is judged correctly. [0010] Moreover, it is NOX at the time of a reducing-agent supply operation according [on the 1st invention and] to a reducing-agent feeder according to the 4th invention. The reducing-agent amount of supply is controlled so that the air-fuel ratio of the inflow exhaust air to an occlusion reduction catalyst turns into a setting air-fuel ratio defined beforehand, and he is trying to amend elapsed time or a reference value based on this setting air-fuel ratio. Namely, NOX at the time of a reducing-agent supply operation in the 4th invention It is not concerned with the air-fuel ratio of the inflow exhaust air to an occlusion reduction catalyst, but is NOX. The degradation degree of an occlusion reduction catalyst is judged correctly.

[0011] In order to solve the above-mentioned technical problem, according to the 5th invention, moreover, in the flueway of the internal combustion engine with which it was made for the air-fuel ratio in a combustion chamber to serve as Lean When the air-fuel ratio of inflow exhaust air is Lean, it is NOX under inflow exhaust air. NOX which is stored, and is stored if the oxygen density under inflow exhaust air falls NOX emitted and returned An occlusion reduction catalyst is arranged. NOX An occlusion reduction catalyst to NOX It is NOX when it should emit. It is a reducing-agent feeder to NOX so that the air-fuel ratio of the inflow exhaust air to an occlusion reduction catalyst may become rich. A reducing agent is supplied to an occlusion reduction catalyst. It is NOX after starting the reducing-agent supply operation by the reducing-agent feeder. After the air-fuel ratio of the

inflow exhaust air to an occlusion reduction catalyst stops being Lean NOX Elapsed time until the air-fuel ratio of the outflow exhaust air from an occlusion reduction catalyst becomes rich is detected. It is NOX by comparing the reference value beforehand determined as this elapsed time. In the catalyst de-activation decision equipment of the internal combustion engine which judged the degradation degree of an occlusion reduction catalyst Engine operational status or NOX at the time of the reducing-agent supply operation by the reducing-agent feeder, or the reducing-agent supply onset of action It judges whether the condition of an occlusion reduction catalyst is an established state defined beforehand. It is NOX by comparing elapsed time and a reference value in case this condition is an established state. He is trying to judge the degradation degree of an occlusion reduction catalyst. That is, by the 5th invention, they are engine operational status or NOX. It is NOX if the condition of an occlusion reduction catalyst is not an established state. Since decision of the degradation degree of an occlusion reduction catalyst is forbidden, it is NOX. The degradation degree of an occlusion reduction catalyst is judged correctly.

[Embodiment of the Invention] if <u>drawing 1</u> is referred to -- 1 -- an engine body and 2 -- a piston and 3 -- in an inlet valve and 6, an exhaust air port and 7 show an exhaust valve, and, as for a combustion chamber and 4, 8 shows [a suction port and 5] an ignition plug, respectively. A suction port 4 is connected to a surge tank 10 through the corresponding inhalation-of-air branch pipe 9, and a surge tank 10 is connected to an air cleaner 12 through an air intake duct 11. A fuel injection valve 13 is arranged in the inhalation-of-air branch pipe 9, and a throttle valve 14 is arranged in an air intake duct 11. On the other hand, it connects with the casing 17 which held the ** catalyst 16 through the exhaust manifold 15 at the time of starting, casing 17 minds an exhaust pipe 18, and the exhaust air port 6 is NOX. It connects with the casing 20 which held the occlusion reduction catalyst 19. Furthermore, an exhaust pipe 21 is connected to casing 20.

[0013] An electronic control unit (ECU) 30 consists of a digital computer, and ROM (read-only memory)32, RAM (random access memory)33 and CPU (microprocessor)34 which were mutually connected through the bidirectional bus 31, B-RAM (backup RAM)35 always connected to the power source, input port 36, and an output port 37 are provided. In an air intake duct 11, the inhalation air content sensor 38 for detecting the mass flow rate of inhalation air is arranged. In an exhaust pipe 18, it is NOX. The temperature sensor 39 which generates the output voltage proportional to the temperature of inflow exhaust air to the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 is attached. This exhaust-gas temperature is NOX. The temperature of the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 is expressed and TC is called whenever [catalyst temperature] hereafter. Moreover, in an exhaust pipe 18, it is NOX. The air-fuel ratio sensor 40 which generates the output voltage showing the airfuel ratio AFI of inflow exhaust air to the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 is attached, and it is NOX in an exhaust pipe 21. The air-fuel ratio sensor 41 which generates the output voltage showing the air-fuel ratio AFO of the outflow exhaust air from the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 is attached. The output voltage of these sensors 38, 39, 40, and 41 is inputted into input port 36 through corresponding A-D converter 42, respectively. Furthermore, the rotational frequency sensor 43 which generates the output pulse showing an engine rotational frequency is connected to input port 36. On the other hand, an output port 37 is connected to each ignition plug 8, each fuel injection valve 13, and a display 45 through the drive circuit 44 which corresponds, respectively, respectively.

[0014] A display 45 is NOX. It is for indicating that the degradation degree of the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 became larger than the setting degree defined beforehand, for example, consists of a lamp. Drawing 2 shows roughly the concentration of the typical component under exhaust air discharged from a gas column. unburnt [under exhaust air discharged from a gas column so that drawing 2 may show] -- oxygen O2 under exhaust air which the amount of HC and CO increases, so that the air-fuel ratio of the gaseous mixture which carries out a fuel in a combustion chamber 3 becomes rich, and is discharged from a gas column An amount increases, so that the air-fuel ratio of the gaseous mixture which carries out a fuel in a combustion chamber 3 becomes Lean. In addition, NOX It is NOX when a reducing agent or air is not supplied in 2nd order in the flueway of the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 upstream. It is in agreement with the air-fuel ratio of the gaseous mixture by which the air-fuel ratio of inflow exhaust air is made to burn in a combustion chamber 3

to the occlusion reduction catalyst 19.

[0015] A catalyst 17 is NOX at the time of starting. It is for purifying exhaust air at the time of engine starting which the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 is not activating, for example, is formed on alumina support from the three way component catalyst with which noble metals like Platinum Pt were supported. NOX The occlusion reduction catalyst 19 makes an alumina support, and at least one chosen from Potassium K, Sodium Na, Lithium Li, alkali metal like Caesium Cs, Barium Ba, an alkaline earth like Calcium calcium, Lanthanum La, and rare earth like Yttrium Y and noble metals like Platinum Pt, Palladium Pd, Rhodium Rh, and Iridium Ir are supported on this support. This NOX The occlusion reduction catalyst 19 is NOX when the air-fuel ratio of inflow exhaust air is Lean. NOX which is stored, and is stored if the oxygen density under inflow exhaust air falls The NOX absorption/emission and the reduction operation emitted and returned are performed. Here, it is NOX. It is thought that the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 stores NOX by absorption. [0016] Above-mentioned NOX It will be this NOX if the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 is arranged in an engine flueway. The occlusion reduction catalyst 19 is actually NOX. It is this NOX although absorption/emission and a reduction operation are performed. There is also a part which is not clear about the detailed mechanism of absorption/emission and a reduction operation. However, this NOX It is thought that absorption/emission and a reduction operation are performed by the mechanism as shown in drawing 3 (A) and 3 (B). Next, it becomes the same mechanism even if it uses other noble metals, alkali metal, an alkaline earth, and rare earth, although this mechanism is explained taking the case of the case where Platinum Pt and Barium Ba are made to support, on support. [0017] That is, as the oxygen density under inflow exhaust air will increase sharply if inflow exhaust air becomes Lean considerably, and shown in drawing 3 (A), it is these oxygen O2. O2 - Or it adheres to the front face of Platinum Pt in the form of O2-. on the other hand -- NO under inflow exhaust air -- the front-face top of Platinum Pt -- O2- or O2- reacting -- NO2 It becomes (2 NO+O2 ->2NO2). subsequently, generated NO2 a part is shown in drawing 3 (A), being absorbed in an absorbent and combining with the barium oxide BaO it being further alike and oxidizing on Platinum Pt, -- as -- nitrate ion NO3- It is spread in an absorbent in a form. Thus, NOX NOX It is absorbed in the occlusion reduction catalyst 19.

[0018] As long as the oxygen density under flowing exhaust air is high, it is NO2 in the front face of Platinum Pt. It is generated and is NOX of an absorbent. It is NO2 unless absorptance is saturated. It is absorbed in an absorbent and is nitrate ion NO3. - It is generated. On the other hand, the oxygen density under flowing exhaust air falls, and it is NO2. When the amount of generation falls, a reaction goes to hard flow (NO3-->NO2), and it is the nitrate ion NO3 in an absorbent thus. - NO2 It is emitted from an absorbent in a form. That is, it is NOX if the oxygen density under inflow exhaust air falls. The occlusion reduction catalyst 19 to NOX It will be emitted. It will be NOX if the oxygen density under inflow exhaust air will fall if the degree of Lean of inflow exhaust air becomes low, therefore the degree of Lean of inflow exhaust air is made low. The occlusion reduction catalyst 19 to NOX It will be emitted.

[0019] On the other hand, it is NOX at this time. When the air-fuel ratio of the inflow exhaust air to the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 is made into rich or theoretical air fuel ratio, a lot of HC and COs are contained so that drawing 2 may show during this exhaust air, and a lot of these HC and COs are oxygen O2 on Platinum Pt. - Or you react with O2- and it is made to oxidize. Moreover, about the air-fuel ratio of inflow exhaust air, it is [rich or] an absorbent to NO2 in order for the oxygen density under inflow exhaust air to fall, if it is made theoretical air fuel ratio. It is emitted and is this NO2. You react with HC and CO and it is made to return, as shown in drawing 3 (B). Thus, it is NO2 on the front face of Platinum Pt. When it stops existing, it is NO2 from an absorbent to the degree from a degree. It is emitted and returned.

[0020] In the internal combustion engine of <u>drawing 1</u>, fuel injection duration TAU is computed based on a degree type.

TAU=TB-KK- (AFS/AFT)

In TB, basic fuel injection duration, KK ********, and AFS express theoretical air fuel ratio (= 14.6), and AFT expresses the target air-fuel ratio here, respectively. The basic fuel injection duration TB is fuel injection duration required to make into theoretical air fuel ratio the air-fuel ratio of the gaseous mixture made to burn in a combustion chamber 3, and is beforehand found by experiment.

This basic fuel injection duration TB is beforehand memorized in ROM32 as a function of the inhalation air content Ga showing engine operational status, for example, an engine load, and the engine rotational frequency N.

[0021] KK a correction factor is maintained by 1.0 when it is not necessary to put together an increase-in-quantity correction factor, a study correction factor, etc., and to express and amend them at the time of an increase-in-quantity correction factor and acceleration at the time of a warm-up. The target air-fuel ratio AFT is the desired value of the air-fuel ratio of the gaseous mixture made to burn in a combustion chamber 3, therefore is NOX. The desired value of the air-fuel ratio of the inflow exhaust air to the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 is expressed. At the time of AFT>AFS, it is NOX. The air-fuel ratio of the inflow exhaust air to the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 becomes Lean, and it is NOX at the time of AFT<AFS. The air-fuel ratio of the inflow exhaust air to the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 becomes

[0022] In the internal combustion engine of drawing 1, the target air-fuel ratio AFT is usually maintained by the Lean air-fuel ratio AFL (>AFS) defined according to engine operational status at the time of operation. Therefore, NOX discharged by the engine 1 NOX It will be stored in the occlusion reduction catalyst 19. However, NOX NOX of the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 Since there is a limitation in storage capacity, it is NOX. NOX of the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 It is NOX before storage capacity is saturated. The occlusion reduction catalyst 19 to NOX It is necessary to make it emit. So, at this embodiment, it is NOX. NOX stored in the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 An amount is calculated and it is this NOX. It is NOX when a quantity to be stored increases more than the set point defined beforehand. The air-fuel ratio of the inflow exhaust air to the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 is switched richly temporarily, and, thereby, it is NOX. NOX currently stored in the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 He emits and is trying to return. Namely, NOX NOX within the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 When it should emit and return, the target air-fuel ratio AFT is temporarily switched to the rich air-fuel ratio AFR from the Lean air-fuel ratio AFL. [0023] Drawing 4 is NOX when switching the target air-fuel ratio AFT richly. It is the experimental result which shows roughly change of the air-fuel ratio AFI of inflow exhaust air and the air-fuel ratio AFO of outflow exhaust air to the occlusion reduction catalyst 19. It sets to the time amount a of drawing 4, and is NOX. NOX of the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 If it is judged that emission and a reduction operation should be started, the target air-fuel ratio AFT will be made to fall gradually towards the rich air-fuel ratio AFR, and, as a result, the inflow exhaust air air-fuel ratio AFI and the outflow exhaust air air-fuel ratio AFO will fall.

[0024] Subsequently, when it comes to time amount b, the inflow exhaust air air-fuel ratio AFI turns into theoretical air fuel ratio, and, subsequently, becomes rich. It stops namely, being Lean. On the other hand, the outflow exhaust air air-fuel ratio AFO is mostly maintained by theoretical air fuel ratio AFT at this time. This is NOX if the inflow exhaust air air-fuel ratio AFI stops being Lean. NOX of the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 Emission and a reduction operation start substantially and it is NOX. It sets in the occlusion reduction catalyst 19, and is HC, CO, NOX, and O2. It is thought that it is for balancing mostly. In addition, the outflow exhaust air air-fuel ratio AFO may be only maintained by foolish ** Rich at this time.

[0025] Subsequently, when it comes to time amount c, the outflow exhaust air air-fuel ratio AFO becomes rich, and it falls until it is in agreement subsequently to the rich air-fuel ratio AFR. This is NOX. It is NOX and O2 in the occlusion reduction catalyst 19. It is thought that it is because it was almost lost, so HC and CO become superfluous. Therefore, time amount c is NOX. It can regard as the time amount which emission and a reduction operation completed.

[0026] So, when the outflow exhaust air air-fuel ratio AFO becomes rich, he is trying to return the target air-fuel ratio AFT to the Lean air-fuel ratio AFL immediately. In addition, drawing 4 shows the case where the target air-fuel ratio AFT is maintained to the rich air-fuel ratio AFR, also after the outflow exhaust air air-fuel ratio AFO becomes rich, and it differs from Air Fuel Ratio Control of this embodiment. Therefore, it sets to the elapsed time ET after the inflow exhaust air air-fuel ratio AFI stops being Lean until an outflow exhaust air air-fuel ratio becomes rich, and is NOX. NOX of the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 It is possible that emission and a reduction operation are performed substantially.

[0027] On the other hand, it is NOX. NOX of the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 A quantity to be

beforehand.

stored cannot be calculated directly. However, NOX NOX which flows into the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 The addition value of an amount is NOX. The quantity to be stored is expressed. So, at this embodiment, it is NOX. NOX which flows into the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 per unit time amount An amount QN is calculated and it is this NOX. It is NOX when the addition value SQN of an amount QN becomes larger than the set point defined beforehand. NOX of the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 He is trying to start emission and a reduction operation.

[0028] By the way, NOX It is NOX as the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 is used. The occlusion reduction catalyst 19 deteriorates and, as a result, it is NOX. NOX of the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 A storage operation falls. On the other hand, it is NOX. NOX within the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 It is NOX as a quantity to be stored decreases. Time amount required for emission and a reduction operation becomes short. Therefore, it is NOX when the above-mentioned elapsed time ET

becomes shorter than the reference value REF defined beforehand. The degradation degree of the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 can judge that it became larger than the setting degree defined

[0029] However, as the beginning described, elapsed time ET is NOX. NOX of the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 The time of emission and a reduction operation, or NOX Engine operational status or NOX at the time of emission and the reduction onset of action It may change according to the condition of the occlusion reduction catalyst 19. This is explained to a detail with reference to drawing 5 and drawing 6. NOX NOX of the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 NOX when the modification operation to the rich air-fuel ratio AFR of the target air-fuel ratio AFT is started in order to perform emission and a reduction operation NOX of the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 Quantity to be stored, They are a three way component catalyst 16 and NOX to a list. The oxygen quantity to be stored of the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 is set to SQNR and SQOXR, respectively. NOX Whenever [catalyst temperature / when the air-fuel ratio AFI of inflow exhaust air changes from Lean's condition to the condition to the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 that he is not Lean 1. and, an inhalation air content are set to TCRGaR, respectively. NOX If the rich air-fuel ratio at the time of emission and a reduction operation is set to AFTR In drawing 5 (A), drawing 5 (B) the relation between TCR and elapsed time ET the relation between SQNR and elapsed time ET In drawing 5 (C), drawing 6 (A) shows the relation between GaR and elapsed time ET, and drawing 6 (B) shows the relation between SQOXR and elapsed time ET for the relation between AFRR and elapsed time ET, respectively.

[0030] when TCR is low, as for elapsed time ET, TCR becomes low whenever [catalyst temperature], so that <u>drawing 5</u> (A) may show -- it takes and becomes short, and whenever [catalyst temperature], when TCR is high, TCR becomes high -- it takes and becomes short. This is NOX. NOX of the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 Occlusion capacity is dependent on whenever [catalyst temperature], and it is NOX. NOX which should be emitted and returned if occlusion capacity becomes low Since an amount decreases, it is thought that it is because elapsed time ET becomes short.

[0031] Moreover, elapsed time ET is NOX so that <u>drawing 5</u> (B) may show. It becomes long as a quantity to be stored SQNR becomes large. This is NOX. NOX which should be emitted and returned if the amount of occlusion increases Since an amount increases, it is thought that it is because elapsed time ET becomes long. Furthermore, elapsed time ET becomes short as the rich airfuel ratio AFRR becomes small, so that <u>drawing 5</u> (C) may show. This is NOX as a rich air-fuel ratio becomes small. It is thought that it is because the amount of the reducing agent, i.e., HC and CO, supplied to the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 per unit time amount increases.

[0032] Furthermore, it becomes short as the inhalation air content GaR of elapsed time ET increases, so that drawing 6 (A) may show. This is NOX as an inhalation air content increases. It is thought that it is because the amount of HC and CO which are supplied to the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 per unit time amount increases. Furthermore, it becomes long as the oxygen quantity to be stored SQOXR of elapsed time ET increases, so that drawing 6 (B) may show. This is NOX as an oxygen quantity to be stored increases. It is thought that it is for HC and the amount of COs which are consumed without being used for emission and a reduction operation to increase.

[0033] Thus, elapsed time may be changed. Therefore, NOX I hear that the inflow addition value SQN became larger than the set point, and it is NOX. NOX of the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 I

hear that emission and a reduction operation were started and elapsed time ET became shorter than a reference value REF at this time, and it is NOX. When the degradation degree of the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 judges that it became larger than a setting degree, it will incorrect-judge. [0034] Then, it is NOX, when elapsed time ET is amended based on above-mentioned TCR, SQNR, AFRR, GaR, and SQOXR and the elapsed time CET after amendment becomes shorter than a reference value REF. He is trying for the degradation degree of the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 to judge that it became larger than a setting degree. Specifically, the elapsed time CET after amendment is computed by the degree type. [0035]

CET=ET-KT-KN-KR-KG-KOX -- here -- KT -- whenever [catalyst temperature] -- a correction factor and KN -- NOX In the amount correction factor of occlusion, and KR, a rich air-fuel ratio correction factor and KG express an inhalation air content correction factor, and KOX expresses the oxygen quantity-to-be-stored correction factor, respectively. in a correction factor KT, as is shown in drawing 7 (A), when TCR is low, TCR becomes [whenever / catalyst temperature] low whenever [catalyst temperature] -- it takes and becomes large, and whenever [catalyst temperature], when TCR is high, TCR becomes high -- it takes and becomes large. This correction factor KT is beforehand memorized in ROM32 in the form of the map shown in drawing 7 (A). [0036] NOX The amount correction factor KN of occlusion is NOX as shown in drawing 7 (B). It becomes small as a quantity to be stored SQNR becomes large. This correction factor KN is beforehand memorized in ROM32 in the form of the map shown in drawing 7 (B). The rich air-fuel ratio correction factor KR becomes large as are shown in drawing 7 (C) and the rich air-fuel ratio AFRR becomes small. This correction factor KR is beforehand memorized in ROM32 in the form of the map shown in drawing 7 (C).

[0037] It becomes large as are shown in <u>drawing 8</u> (A) and the inhalation air content GaR of the inhalation air content correction factor KG increases. This correction factor KG is beforehand memorized in ROM32 in the form of the map shown in <u>drawing 8</u> (A). It becomes small as are shown in <u>drawing 8</u> (B) and the oxygen quantity to be stored SQOXR of the oxygen quantity-to-bestored correction factor KOX increases. This correction factor KG is beforehand memorized in ROM32 in the form of the map shown in <u>drawing 8</u> (B).

[0038] Thus, it is NOX by using the elapsed time CET after amendment. The degradation degree of the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 can be judged correctly. Drawing 9 and drawing 10 show the calculation routine of the target air-fuel ratio AFT. This routine is performed by interruption for every setup time defined beforehand. Reference of drawing 9 and drawing 10 distinguishes first whether the flag is set or not at step 50. This flag is NOX. NOX of the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 It is set when emission and a reduction operation should be performed, and it is reset except it. When the flag is reset, subsequently to step 51 it progresses, and the Lean air-fuel ratio AFL is computed. The Lean air-fuel ratio AFL is beforehand defined as a function of the time amount after the inhalation air content Ga showing for example, an engine load, the engine rotational frequency N, and the target air-fuel ratio AFT are switched to the Lean air-fuel ratio AFL. Let this AFL be the target air-fuel ratio AFT at continuing step 52.

[0039] At continuing step 53, it is NOX to per unit time amount. NOX which flows into the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 An amount QN is computed. Inflow NOX per unit time amount Since it increases as the inhalation air content Ga of an amount QN increases, and it increases as the engine rotational frequency N becomes high, for example based on the inhalation air content Ga and the engine rotational frequency N, the amount QN of inflow NOX(s) per unit time amount can be calculated. At continuing step 54, it is Inflow NOX. The amount addition value SQN is computed (SQN=SQN+QN). At continuing step 55, the amount QOX of oxygen discharged by per unit time amount from an engine 1 is computed. Since it increases as the inhalation air content Ga of the amount [of discharge oxygen] QOX per unit time amount increases, and it increases as the Lean air-fuel ratio AFL becomes large, for example based on the inhalation air content Ga and the Lean air-fuel ratio AFL, the amount QOX of discharge oxygen per unit time amount can be calculated. At continuing step 56, the amount addition value SQOX of discharge oxygen is computed (SQOX=SQOX+QOX). This amount addition value SQOX of discharge oxygen is a three way component catalyst 17 and NOX. The amount of oxygen stored in the occlusion reduction catalyst 19

is expressed.

[0040] At continuing step 57, it is Inflow NOX. It is distinguished whether the amount addition value SQN is larger than the set point S1 defined beforehand. A processing cycle is ended at the time of SQN<=S1. On the other hand, subsequently to step 58 at the time of SQN>S1, it progresses, and is NOX. NOX of the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 It is distinguished whether the conditions for performing emission and a reduction operation are satisfied. For example, at the time of engine starting, at the time of idling operation, at the time of acceleration operation, it considers as condition failure, and considers as condition formation except it. A processing cycle is ended at the time of condition failure. Subsequently to step 59 at the time of condition formation, it progresses, and a flag is set. The rich air-fuel ratio AFR is computed at continuing step 60. The rich air-fuel ratio AFR is beforehand defined as the inhalation air content Ga, the engine rotational frequency N, and a function of the elapsed time CET after amendment. At continuing step 61, it is the inflow NOX at this time. The amount addition value SQN is NOX. It memorizes as a quantity to be stored SQNR, and the amount addition value SQOX of discharge oxygen is memorized as an oxygen quantity to be stored SQOXR. SQN and SQOX are cleared at continuing step 62. Subsequently, a processing cycle is ended.

[0041] When a flag is set, it progresses to step 63 from step 50, and only in constant value a, the target air-fuel ratio AFT decreases (AFT=AFT-a). At continuing step 64, it is distinguished whether the target air-fuel ratio AFT is smaller than the rich air-fuel ratio AFR. A processing cycle is ended at the time of AFT>=AFR. Subsequently to step 65 at the time of AFT<AFR, it progresses, and AFT is made in agreement by AFR. Therefore, if a flag is set, from AFL, the target air-fuel ratio AFT will be made to decrease gradually, and, subsequently to AFR, will be maintained. Reset of a flag returns the target air-fuel ratio AFT to AFL.

[0042] In addition, at this embodiment, it is NOX. NOX of the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 It is NOX in order to perform reduction and an emission operation. The view that the reducing agent is supplied to the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 is also made. In this case, since the target air-fuel ratio AFT begins to decrease from the Lean air-fuel ratio AFL, it will be called [even being again returned to the Lean air-fuel ratio AFL, and] the time of a reducing-agent supply operation. Drawing 11 R> 1 shows the calculation routine of elapsed time ET. This routine is performed by interruption for every setup time defined beforehand.

[0043] Reference of drawing 11 distinguishes first whether the above-mentioned flag is set at step 70. A processing cycle is ended when the flag is reset. When the flag is set, subsequently to step 71 it progresses, and it is distinguished whether the inflow exhaust air air-fuel ratio AFI is Lean. For example, it is judged as Lean at the time of AFI>14.8, and it is judged at the time of AFI<=14.8 that he is not Lean. A processing cycle is ended when AFI is Lean. When AFI is not Lean, subsequently to step 72 it progresses, and in the last processing cycle, it is distinguished whether the inflow exhaust air air-fuel ratio AFI is Lean. AFI when AFI is Lean in the last processing cycle -- from Lean's condition -- since -- when it changes to the condition that he is not Lean, subsequently to step 73 it progresses, and whenever [catalyst temperature / at this time], TC is memorized as TCR and the inhalation air content Ga is memorized as GaR. Subsequently, it progresses to step 74. On the other hand, when AFI is not Lean in the last processing cycle, it jumps to step 74. [0044] At step 74, the increment of the elapsed time ET is carried out only for 1. At continuing step 75, it is distinguished whether the outflow exhaust air air-fuel ratio AFO is rich. For example, it is judged at the time of AFO<14.4 that it is rich, and it is judged at the time of AFO>=14.4 that it is not rich. Subsequently to [when AFO is not rich], a processing cycle is ended. On the other hand, when AFO is rich, subsequently to step 76 it progresses, and the rich air-fuel ratio AFR at this time is memorized as AFRR. A flag is reset at continuing step 77 and a degradation decision routine is performed at continuing step 78. This degradation decision routine is shown in drawing 12. [0045] Reference of drawing 12 computes a correction factor KT whenever [catalyst temperature] from the map of drawing 7 (A) at step 80 first. At continuing step 81, it is the map of drawing 7 (B) to NOX. The quantity-to-be-stored correction factor KN is computed, and the oxygen quantity-to-bestored correction factor KOX is computed from the map of drawing 8 (B) at continuing step 82. At continuing step 83, the rich air-fuel ratio correction factor KR is computed from the map of drawing 7 (C), and the inhalation air content correction factor KG is computed from the map of drawing 8

(A) at continuing step 84. The amended elapsed time CET is computed at continuing step 85 (CET=ET-KT-KN-KOX-KR-KG). At continuing step 86, it is distinguished whether the amended elapsed time CET is smaller than a reference value REF. Subsequently to step 87 at the time of CET<REF, it progresses, and a display 45 is made to operate. On the other hand, subsequently to step 88 at the time of CET>=REF, it progresses, and a display 45 is made to stop. [0046] If drawing 11 is referred to again, elapsed time ET will be cleared at continuing step 79. Drawing 13 shows the calculation routine of fuel injection duration TAU. This routine is performed by interruption for every setup time defined beforehand. Reference of drawing 13 computes the basic fuel injection duration TB at step 90 first. KK a correction factor is computed at continuing step 91. Fuel injection duration TAU is computed at continuing step 92 (TAU=TB-KK-AFS/AFT). In the above-mentioned embodiment, elapsed time ET is amended based on TCR, SQNR, AFRR, GaR, and SQOXR. However, it is NOX, when a reference value REF is amended based on TCR, SQNR, AFRR, GaR, and SQOXR and it becomes shorter than the reference value after elapsed time ET amending. The degradation degree of the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 can also judge that it became larger than a setting degree. Naturally, both may be amended. [0047] Another embodiment is shown in drawing 14. The internal combustion engine of drawing 14 is NOX. It differs in the internal combustion engine and configuration of drawing 1 in that the airfuel ratio sensor 40 is not attached in the exhaust pipe 18 of the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 upstream. When the inflow exhaust air air-fuel ratio AFI changes from Lean's condition to the condition that he is not Lean, the outflow exhaust air air-fuel ratio AFO also changes from Lean's condition to the condition that he is not Lean. That is, change of the inflow exhaust air air-fuel ratio AFI can be known by detecting the outflow exhaust air air-fuel ratio AFO. So, at this embodiment, it is NOX. The air-fuel ratio sensor of the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 upstream is omitted, and it is NOX. He is trying to judge whether the inflow exhaust air air-fuel ratio AFI changed from Lean's condition to the condition that he is not Lean, by the air-fuel ratio sensor 41 of occlusion reduction catalyst 19 lower stream of a river.

[0048] On the other hand, as mentioned above, they are engine operational status or NOX. Since elapsed time ET may be changed according to the condition of the occlusion reduction catalyst 19, it will be said that it is meaningless to compare the elapsed time ET in the condition of differing. Therefore, it will be NOX if the elapsed time ET in the same condition is compared. The degradation degree of the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 can be judged correctly. So, at this embodiment, they are engine operational status or NOX. It is based on the elapsed time ET in case the condition of the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 is an established state defined beforehand, and is NOX. He is trying to judge the degradation degree of the occlusion reduction catalyst 19. In other words, they are engine operational status or NOX. It is NOX when the condition of the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 is not an established state. It will be said that decision of the degradation degree of the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 is forbidden.

[0049] It is NOX when it is in the setting range where TCR was defined beforehand whenever [catalyst temperature], and the NOX quantity to be stored SQNR was defined beforehand, and the rich air-fuel ratio AFRR was defined beforehand, and the inhalation air content GaR was defined beforehand, and the oxygen quantity to be stored SQOXR was defined beforehand. The degradation degree of the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 is judged. It is NOX when any one is outside a setting range. A judgment of the degradation degree of the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 is not made.

[0050] <u>Drawing 15</u> shows the calculation routine of the elapsed time ET in this embodiment. This routine is performed by interruption for every setup time defined beforehand. In addition, the calculation routine of the target air-fuel ratio AFT shown in <u>drawing 9</u> and <u>drawing 10</u> also in this embodiment and the calculation routine of the fuel injection duration TAU shown in <u>drawing 13</u> are performed. Reference of <u>drawing 15</u> R> 5 distinguishes first whether the above-mentioned flag is set at step 170. A processing cycle is ended when the flag is reset. When the flag is set, subsequently to step 171 it progresses, and it is distinguished whether the inflow exhaust air air-fuel ratio AFI is Lean. For example, it is judged as Lean at the time of outflow exhaust air air-fuel ratio AFO>14.8, and it is judged at the time of AFO<=14.8 that he is not Lean. A processing cycle is ended when AFI

is Lean. When AFI is not Lean, subsequently to step 172 it progresses, and in the last processing cycle, it is distinguished whether the inflow exhaust air air-fuel ratio AFI is Lean. When AFI is Lean in the last processing cycle, subsequently to step 173 it progresses, and whenever [catalyst temperature / at this time], TC is memorized as TCR and the inhalation air content Ga is memorized as GaR. Subsequently, it progresses to step 174. When AFI is not Lean in the last processing cycle, it jumps to step 174.

[0051] At step 174, it is distinguished in step 175 to which the increment of the elapsed time ET is carried out and which only 1 follows whether the outflow exhaust air air-fuel ratio AFO is rich. For example, it is judged at the time of AFO<14.4 that it is rich, and it is judged at the time of AFO>=14.4 that it is not rich. Subsequently to [when AFO is not rich], a processing cycle is ended. On the other hand, when AFO is rich, subsequently to step 176 it progresses, and the rich air-fuel ratio AFR at this time is memorized as AFRR. At continuing step 177, a flag is reset and the degradation decision routine shown in drawing 16 is performed in continuing step 178. [0052] Reference of drawing 16 distinguishes first whether TCR is in a setting range whenever [catalyst temperature] at step 180. When TCR is in a setting range, subsequently to step 181 it progresses and is NOX. It is distinguished whether a quantity to be stored SQNR is in a setting range. When SQNR is in a setting range, subsequently to step 182 it progresses, and it is distinguished whether the oxygen quantity to be stored SQOXR is in a setting range. When SQOXR is in a setting range, subsequently to step 183 it progresses, and it is distinguished whether the rich air-fuel ratio AFRR is in a setting range. When AFRR is in a setting range, subsequently to step 184 it progresses, and it is distinguished whether the inhalation air content GaR is in a setting range. When GaR is in a setting range, subsequently to step 185 it progresses, and it is distinguished whether elapsed time ET is smaller than a reference value REF. Subsequently to step 186 at the time of ET<REF, it progresses, and a display 45 is made to operate. On the other hand, subsequently to step 187 at the time of ET>=REF, it progresses, and a display 45 is made to stop. On the other hand, also when any one of TCR, SQNR, SQOXR, AFRR, and GaR(s) is outside a setting range, it progresses to step 187.

[0053] If drawing 15 is referred to again, elapsed time ET will be cleared at continuing step 179. It is NOX by making rich the air-fuel ratio of the gaseous mixture made to burn in a combustion chamber 3 in the embodiment described so far. He is trying for the air-fuel ratio of the inflow exhaust air to the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 to become rich. However, when an engine expansion line performs 2nd fuel injection like an exhaust air line, an inflow exhaust air air-fuel ratio can become rich. Or a reducing-agent feeder is prepared in an exhaust pipe 18, and you may make it an inflow exhaust air air-fuel ratio become rich by supplying a reducing agent from this reducing-agent feeder. In this case, a gasoline, an isooctane, a hexane, a heptane, gas oil, kerosene, butane, a hydrocarbon like a propane, hydrogen, ammonia, a urea, etc. can be used as a reducing agent. [0054] Moreover, at the embodiment described so far, it is NOX. The time of the air-fuel ratio AFI of inflow exhaust air changing from Lean's condition to the condition to the occlusion reduction catalyst 19 that he is not Lean is made into the start time of elapsed time ET. However, the time of changing from the condition which is not rich to a rich condition can also be made into the start time of elapsed time ET. In this case, it is judged at the time of AFI<14.4 that it is rich, and it is judged at

the time of AFI>=14.4 that it is not rich.

[0055] [Effect of the Invention] NOX The degradation degree of an occlusion reduction catalyst can be judged correctly.

[Translation done.]

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- 1. This document has been translated by computer. So the translation may not reflect the original precisely.
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DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

[Brief Description of the Drawings]

[Drawing 1] It is an internal combustion engine's general drawing.

[Drawing 2] It is drawing showing roughly the concentration of the typical component under exhaust air discharged from a combustion chamber.

[Drawing 3] NOX NOX of an occlusion reduction catalyst It is drawing explaining absorption/emission and a reduction operation.

[Drawing 4] It is the diagram showing the inflow exhaust air air-fuel ratio AFI and the outflow exhaust air air-fuel ratio AFO.

[Drawing 5] It is the diagram showing change of elapsed time ET.

[Drawing 6] It is the diagram showing change of elapsed time ET.

[Drawing 7] It is the diagram showing a correction factor.

[Drawing 8] It is the diagram showing a correction factor.

[Drawing 9] It is the flow chart which shows the calculation routine of the target air-fuel ratio AFT.

[Drawing 10] It is the flow chart which shows the calculation routine of the target air-fuel ratio AFT.

[Drawing 11] It is the flow chart which shows the calculation routine of elapsed time ET.

[Drawing 12] It is the flow chart which shows a degradation decision routine.

[Drawing 13] It is the flow chart which shows the calculation routine of fuel injection duration TAU.

[Drawing 14] It is an internal combustion engine's general drawing in another embodiment.

[Drawing 15] It is the flow chart which shows the calculation routine of the elapsed time ET in another embodiment.

[Drawing 16] It is the flow chart which shows the degradation decision routine in another embodiment.

[Description of Notations]

1 -- Engine body

3 -- Combustion chamber

15 -- Exhaust manifold

19 -- NOX Occlusion reduction catalyst

40 41 -- Air-fuel ratio sensor

[Translation done.]

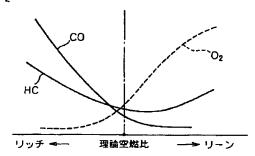
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DRAWINGS

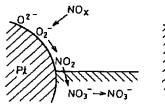
[Drawing 2]



[Drawing 3] ☑ 3

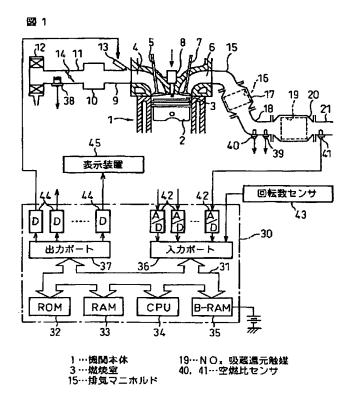
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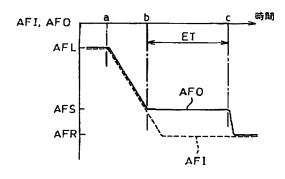
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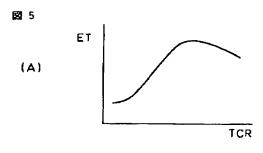
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[Drawing 1]

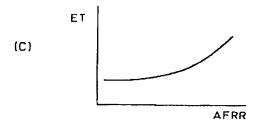




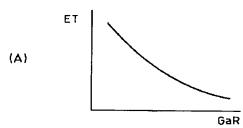
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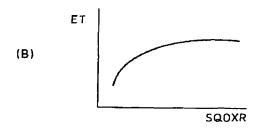




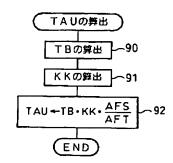


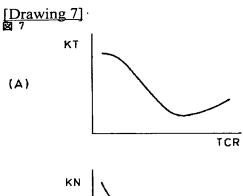


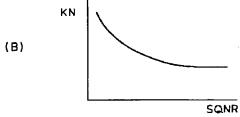


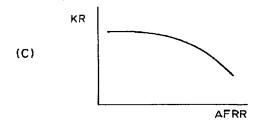


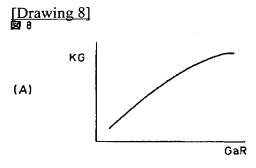
[Drawing 13] 🛛 13

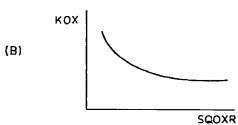






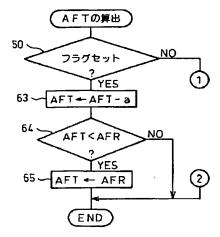


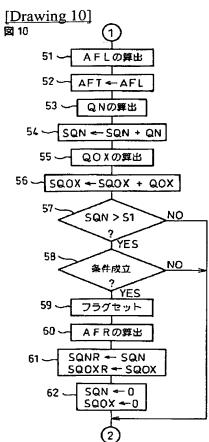




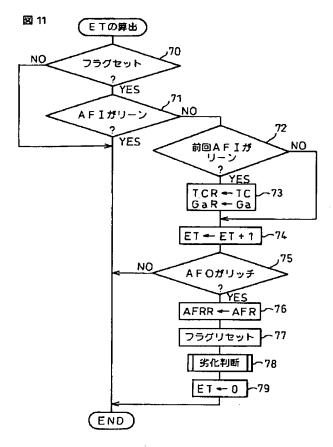
[Drawing 9]

図 9

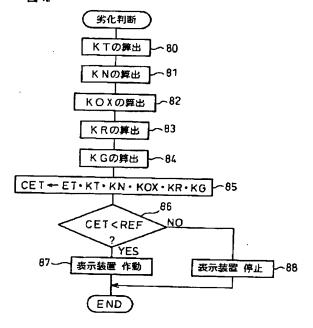




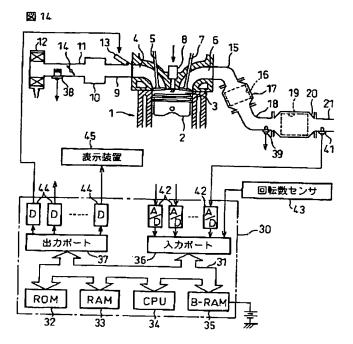
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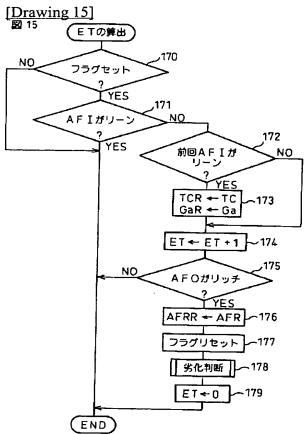


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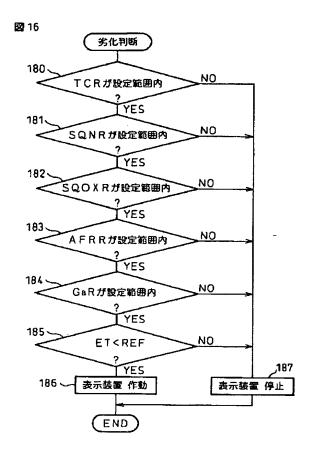


[Drawing 14]





[Drawing 16]



[Translation done.]

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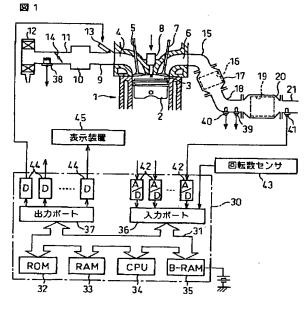
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(54) 【発明の名称】 内燃機関の触媒劣化判断装置

(57) 【要約】

【課題】 NOx 吸蔵還元触媒の劣化度合いを正確に判断する。

【解決手段】 燃焼室3内における空燃比がリーンとなるようにした内燃機関の排気通路内に、流入排気の空燃比がリーンのときに流入排気中のNOx を蓄え、流入排気中の酸素濃度が低下すると蓄えているNOx を放出して還元するNOx吸蔵還元触媒19を配置する。NOx吸蔵還元触媒19からNOx を放出すべきときには燃焼室3内で燃焼せしめられる混合気の空燃比を一時的にリッチにする。NOx吸蔵還元触媒19への流入排気の空燃比がリーンでなくなってから、NOx吸蔵還元触媒19からの流出排気の空燃比がリッチになるまでの経過時間を検出する。流入排気の空燃比がリッチになるときのNOx吸蔵還元触媒温度、吸入空気量、NOx 貯蔵量などに基づいて経過時間を補正し、補正後の経過時間と基準値とを比較することによりNOx吸蔵還元触媒19の劣化度合いを判断する。



1 …機関本体 3 …燃焼室 15…排気マニホルド

19…NOェ 吸蔵遺元触媒 40, 41…空燃比センサ

30

1

【特許請求の範囲】

【請求項1】 燃焼室内における空燃比がリーンとなる ようにした内燃機関の排気通路内に、流入排気の空燃比 がリーンのときに流入排気中のNOx を蓄え、流入排気 中の酸素濃度が低下すると蓄えているNOx を放出して 環元するNOx 吸蔵還元触媒を配置し、NOx 吸蔵還元 触媒からNOx を放出すべきときにはNOx 吸蔵還元触 媒への流入排気の空燃比がリッチとなるように還元剤供 給装置からNOx 吸蔵還元触媒に還元剤を供給し、還元 剤供給装置による還元剤供給作用を開始した後NOx 吸 蔵還元触媒への流入排気の空燃比がリーンでなくなって から、NOx 吸蔵還元触媒からの流出排気の空燃比がリ ッチになるまでの経過時間を検出し、該経過時間と予め 定められた基準値とを比較することによりNOx吸蔵還 元触媒の劣化度合いを判断するようにした内燃機関の触 媒劣化判断装置において、還元剤供給装置による還元剤 供給作用時又は還元剤供給作用開始時における機関運転 状態又はNOx 吸蔵還元触媒の状態に基づいて経過時間 と基準値とのうち少なくとも一方を補正し、補正後の経 過時間と基準値とを比較することによりNOx 吸蔵還元 触媒の劣化度合いを判断するようにした内燃機関の触媒 劣化判断装置。

【請求項2】 還元剤供給装置による還元剤供給作用開始時におけるNOx吸蔵還元触媒の温度に基づいて経過時間又は基準値を補正するようにした請求項1に記載の内燃機関の触媒劣化判断装置。

【請求項3】 還元剤供給装置による還元剤供給作用開始時におけるNOx吸蔵還元触媒のNOx 貯蔵量に基づいて経過時間又は基準値を補正するようにした請求項1に記載の内燃機関の触媒劣化判断装置。

【請求項4】 還元剤供給装置による還元剤供給作用時にNOx 吸蔵還元触媒への流入排気の空燃比が予め定められた設定空燃比となるように還元剤供給量が制御されており、該設定空燃比に基づいて経過時間又は基準値を補正するようにした請求項1に記載の内燃機関の触媒劣化料度装置

【請求項5】 燃焼室内における空燃比がリーンとなるようにした内燃機関の排気通路内に、流入排気の空燃比がリーンのときに流入排気中のNOx を蓄え、流入排気中の酸素濃度が低下すると蓄えているNOx を放出して 40 還元するNOx 吸蔵還元触媒を配置し、NOx 吸蔵還元触媒からNOx を放出すべきときにはNOx 吸蔵還元触媒への流入排気の空燃比がリッチとなるように還元剤供給装置からNOx 吸蔵還元触媒に還元剤を供給し、還元剤供給装置による還元剤供給作用を開始した後NOx 吸蔵還元触媒への流入排気の空燃比がリーンでなくなって利供給装置による還元剤供給作用を開始した後NOx 吸蔵還元触媒への流入排気の空燃比がリーンでなくなってから、NOx 吸蔵還元触媒からの流出排気の空燃比がリッチになるまでの経過時間を検出し、該経過時間と予め定められた基準値とを比較することによりNOx吸蔵還元触媒の劣化度合いを判断するようにした内燃機関の触 50

媒劣化判断装置において、還元剤供給装置による還元剤 供給作用時又は還元剤供給作用開始時における機関運転 状態又はNOx 吸蔵還元触媒の状態が予め定められた設 定状態であるか否かを判断し、該状態が設定状態である ときの経過時間と基準値とを比較することによりNOx 吸蔵還元触媒の劣化度合いを判断するようにした内燃機 関の触媒劣化判断装置。

【発明の詳細な説明】

[0001]

【発明の属する技術分野】本発明は内燃機関の触媒劣化 判断装置に関する。

[0002]

【従来の技術】機関排気通路内の或る位置よりも上流の排気通路、燃焼室、及び吸気通路内に供給された燃料量及び還元剤量に対する、その位置よりも上流の排気通路、燃焼室、及び吸気通路内に供給された空気量の比をその位置における排気の空燃比と称すると、従来より、燃焼室内における空燃比がリーンとなるようにした内燃機関の排気通路内に、流入排気の空燃比がリーンのときに流入排気中のNOxを蓄え、流入排気中の酸素濃度が低下すると蓄えているNOxを放出して還元するNOx吸蔵還元触媒を配置し、NOx吸蔵還元触媒からNOxを放出すべきときにはNOx吸蔵還元触媒への流入排気の空燃比がリッチとなるように還元剤供給装置からNOx吸蔵還元触媒に還元剤を供給するようにした内燃機関が公知である。

【0003】NOx 吸蔵還元触媒への流入排気の空燃比がリッチにされたとしても、NOx吸蔵還元触媒のNOx 放出・還元作用が行われている間はNOx 吸蔵還元触媒からの流出排気の空燃比はほぼ理論空燃比に維持され、次いでNOx 吸蔵還元触媒のNOx 放出・還元作用が完了すると流出排気の空燃比がリッチに切り替わることが確認されている。従って、還元剤供給装置による還元剤供給作用を開始した後NOx 吸蔵還元触媒への流入排気の空燃比がリーンでなくなってから、NOx吸蔵還元触媒からの流出排気の空燃比がリッチになるまでの経過時間はNOx 吸蔵還元触媒のNOx 貯蔵能力を表しており、逆に言うとNOx 吸蔵還元触媒の劣化度合いを表していることになる。

0 【0004】そこで、この経過時間を検出し、経過時間と予め定められた基準値とを比較することによりNOx吸蔵還元触媒の劣化度合いを判断するようにした内燃機関の触媒劣化判断装置が公知である(特開平10-299469号公報参照)。

[0005]

【発明が解決しようとする課題】しかしながら、経過時間は還元剤供給装置による還元剤供給作用時又は還元剤供給作用開始時における機関運転状態又はNOx 吸蔵還元触媒の状態に応じて変動しうる。即ち、例えば還元剤供給装置による還元剤供給作用開始時におけるNOx 吸

3

蔵還元触媒のNOx 貯蔵量が少ないときには多いときに 比べて経過時間は短くなる。ところが、単に経過時間が 短いということでNOx 吸蔵還元触媒の劣化度合いが大 きくなったと判断すると誤判断することになる。

【0006】従って、本発明の目的はNOx 吸蔵還元触 媒の劣化度合いを正確に判断することができる内燃機関 の触媒劣化判断装置を提供することにある。

[0007]

【課題を解決するための手段】上記課題を解決するため に1番目の発明によれば、燃焼室内における空燃比がリ ーンとなるようにした内燃機関の排気通路内に、流入排 気の空燃比がリーンのときに流入排気中のNOx を蓄 え、流入排気中の酸素濃度が低下すると蓄えているNO x を放出して還元するNOx 吸蔵還元触媒を配置し、N Ox 吸蔵還元触媒からNOx を放出すべきときにはNO x 吸蔵還元触媒への流入排気の空燃比がリッチとなるよ うに還元剤供給装置からNOx 吸蔵還元触媒に還元剤を 供給し、還元剤供給装置による還元剤供給作用を開始し た後NOx吸蔵還元触媒への流入排気の空燃比がリーン でなくなってから、NOx吸蔵還元触媒からの流出排気 の空燃比がリッチになるまでの経過時間を検出し、該経 過時間と予め定められた基準値とを比較することにより NOx 吸蔵還元触媒の劣化度合いを判断するようにした 内燃機関の触媒劣化判断装置において、還元剤供給装置 による還元剤供給作用時又は還元剤供給作用開始時にお ける機関運転状態又はNOx 吸蔵還元触媒の状態に基づ いて経過時間と基準値とのうち少なくとも一方を補正 し、補正後の経過時間と基準値とを比較することにより NOx 吸蔵還元触媒の劣化度合いを判断するようにして いる。即ち1番目の発明では、還元剤供給作用時又は還 元剤供給作用開始時における機関運転状態又はNOx 吸 蔵還元触媒の状態に関わらず、NOx 吸蔵還元触媒の劣 化度合いが正確に判断される。

【0008】また、2番目の発明によれば1番目の発明において、還元剤供給装置による還元剤供給作用開始時におけるNOx 吸蔵還元触媒の温度に基づいて経過時間又は基準値を補正するようにしている。即ち2番目の発明では、還元剤供給作用開始時におけるNOx 吸蔵還元触媒の温度に関わらず、NOx 吸蔵還元触媒の劣化度合いが正確に判断される。

【0009】また、3番目の発明によれば1番目の発明において、還元剤供給装置による還元剤供給作用開始時におけるNOx 吸蔵還元触媒のNOx 貯蔵量に基づいて経過時間又は基準値を補正するようにしている。即ち3番目の発明では、還元剤供給作用開始時におけるNOx 吸蔵還元触媒のNOx 貯蔵量に関わらず、NOx 吸蔵還元触媒の劣化度合いが正確に判断される。

【0010】また、4番目の発明によれば1番目の発明において、還元剤供給装置による還元剤供給作用時にNOx吸蔵還元触媒への流入排気の空燃比が予め定められ

た設定空燃比となるように還元剤供給量が制御されており、該設定空燃比に基づいて経過時間又は基準値を補正するようにしている。即ち4番目の発明では、還元剤供給作用時におけるNOx 吸蔵還元触媒への流入排気の空

燃比に関わらず、NOx 吸蔵還元触媒の劣化度合いが正確に判断される。

【0011】また、上記課題を解決するために5番目の 発明によれば、燃焼室内における空燃比がリーンとなる ようにした内燃機関の排気通路内に、流入排気の空燃比 がリーンのときに流入排気中のNOx を蓄え、流入排気 中の酸素濃度が低下すると蓄えているNOx を放出して 還元するNOx 吸蔵還元触媒を配置し、NOx 吸蔵還元 触媒からNOx を放出すべきときにはNOx 吸蔵還元触 媒への流入排気の空燃比がリッチとなるように還元剤供 給装置からNOx 吸蔵還元触媒に還元剤を供給し、還元 剤供給装置による還元剤供給作用を開始した後NOx 吸 蔵還元触媒への流入排気の空燃比がリーンでなくなって から、NOx 吸蔵還元触媒からの流出排気の空燃比がリ ッチになるまでの経過時間を検出し、該経過時間と予め 定められた基準値とを比較することによりNOx 吸蔵還 元触媒の劣化度合いを判断するようにした内燃機関の触 媒劣化判断装置において、還元剤供給装置による還元剤 供給作用時又は還元剤供給作用開始時における機関運転 状態又はNOx 吸蔵還元触媒の状態が予め定められた設 定状態であるか否かを判断し、該状態が設定状態である ときの経過時間と基準値とを比較することによりNOx 吸蔵還元触媒の劣化度合いを判断するようにしている。 即ち5番目の発明では、機関運転状態又はNOx 吸蔵還 元触媒の状態が設定状態でなければNOx 吸蔵還元触媒 の劣化度合いの判断が禁止されるので、NOx 吸蔵還元 触媒の劣化度合いが正確に判断される。

[0012]

【発明の実施の形態】図1を参照すると、1は機関本体、2はピストン、3は燃焼室、4は吸気ポート、5は吸気弁、6は排気ポート、7は排気弁、8は点火栓を夫々示す。吸気ポート4は対応する吸気枝管9を介してサージタンク10に接続され、サージタンク10は吸気ダクト11を介してエアクリーナ12に接続される。吸気枝管9内には燃料噴射弁13が配置され、吸気ダクト11内にはスロットル弁14が配置される。一方、排気ポート6は排気マニホルド15を介して始動時用触媒16を収容したケーシング17に接続され、ケーシング17は排気管18を介してNOx吸蔵還元触媒19を収容したケーシング20に接続される。さらに、ケーシング20には排気管21が接続される。

【0013】電子制御ユニット(ECU)30はデジタルコンピュータからなり、双方向性バス31を介して相互に接続されたROM(リードオンリメモリ)32、RAM(ランダムアクセスメモリ)33、CPU(マイクロプロセッサ)34、常時電源に接続されているB-R

-3-

AM (バックアップRAM) 35、入力ポート36、及 び出力ポート37を具備する。吸気ダクト11内には吸 入空気の質量流量を検出するための吸入空気量センサ3 8が配置される。排気管18にはNOx 吸蔵還元触媒1 9への流入排気の温度に比例した出力電圧を発生する温 度センサ39が取り付けられる。この排気温度はNOx 吸蔵還元触媒19の温度を表しており、以下、触媒温度 TCと称する。また、排気管18にはNOx 吸蔵還元触 媒19への流入排気の空燃比AFIを表す出力電圧を発 生する空燃比センサ40が取り付けられ、排気管21に はNOx 吸蔵還元触媒19からの流出排気の空燃比AF Oを表す出力電圧を発生する空燃比センサ41が取り付 けられる。これらセンサ38,39,40,41の出力 電圧はそれぞれ対応するAD変換器42を介して入力ポ ート36に入力される。さらに、入力ポート36には機 関回転数を表す出力パルスを発生する回転数センサ43 が接続される。一方、出力ポート37はそれぞれ対応す る駆動回路44を介して各点火栓8、各燃料噴射弁1 3、及び表示装置45にそれぞれ接続される。

【0014】表示装置45はNOx 吸蔵還元触媒19の 20 劣化度合いが予め定められた設定度合いよりも大きくなったことを表示するためのものであり、例えばランプからなる。図2は気筒から排出される排気中の代表的な成分の濃度を概略的に示している。図2からわかるように、気筒から排出される排気中の未燃HC, COの量は燃焼室3内で燃料せしめられる混合気の空燃比がリッチになるほど増大し、気筒から排出される排気中の酸素O2の量は燃焼室3内で燃料せしめられる混合気の空燃比がリーンになるほど増大する。なお、NOx 吸蔵還元触媒19上流の排気通路内に還元剤又は空気が2次的に供 30 給されない場合には、NOx 吸蔵還元触媒19への流入排気の空燃比は燃焼室3内で燃焼せしめられる混合気の空燃比に一致する。

【0015】始動時触媒17はNOx 吸蔵還元触媒19 が活性化していない機関始動時に排気を浄化するための ものであり、例えばアルミナ担体上に白金Ptのような 貴金属が担持された三元触媒から形成される。NOx 吸 蔵還元触媒19は例えばアルミナを担体とし、この担体 上に例えばカリウムK, ナトリウムNa, リチウムL i, セシウムCsのようなアルカリ金属、バリウムB a,カルシウムCaのようなアルカリ土類、ランタンL a, イットリウムYのような希土類から選ばれた少なく とも一つと、白金Pt、パラジウムPd、ロジウムR h、イリジウムIrのような貴金属とが担持されてい る。このNOx 吸蔵還元触媒19は流入排気の空燃比が リーンのときにはNOx を蓄え、流入排気中の酸素濃度 が低下すると蓄えているNOx を放出して還元するNO x吸放出・還元作用を行う。ここで、NOx 吸蔵還元触 媒19は吸収によりNOxを蓄えると考えられている。

【0016】上述のNOx 吸蔵還元触媒19を機関排気 50 それぞれ表している。基本燃料噴射時間TBは燃焼室3

通路内に配置すればこのNOx 吸蔵還元触媒19は実際にNOx 吸放出・還元作用を行うがこのNOx 吸放出・還元作用の詳細なメカニズムについては明らかでない部分もある。しかしながらこのNOx 吸放出・還元作用は図3(A),3(B)に示すようなメカニズムで行われているものと考えられる。次にこのメカニズムについて担体上に白金Pt及びバリウムBaを担持させた場合を例にとって説明するが他の貴金属、アルカリ金属、アルカリ土類、希土類を用いても同様なメカニズムとなる。

【0017】即ち、流入排気がかなりリーンになると流入排気中の酸素濃度が大巾に増大し、図3 (A) に示されるようにこれら酸素O2 がO2 - 又はO 2 -の形で白金Ptの表面に付着する。一方、流入排気中のNOは白金Ptの表面上でO2 - 又はO 2 -と反応し、NO2 となる(2NO+O2 \rightarrow 2NO2)。次いで生成されたNO2の一部は白金Pt上でさらにに酸化されつつ吸収剤内に吸収されて酸化バリウムBaOと結合しながら、図3

(A) に示されるように硝酸イオンNO3 $^-$ の形で吸収 剤内に拡散する。このようにしてNOx がNOx 吸蔵還 元触媒 $^-$ 19内に吸収される。

【0018】流入する排気中の酸素濃度が高い限り白金Ptの表面でNO2が生成され、吸収剤のNOx吸収能力が飽和しない限りNO2が吸収剤内に吸収されて硝酸イオンNO3-が生成される。これに対して流入する排気中の酸素濃度が低下してNO2の生成量が低下すると反応が逆方向(NO3- \rightarrow NO2)に進み、斯くして吸収剤内の硝酸イオンNO3-がNO2の形で吸収剤から放出される。即ち、流入排気中の酸素濃度が低下するとNOx吸蔵還元触媒19からNOxが放出されることになる。流入排気のリーンの度合が低くなれば流入排気中の酸素濃度が低下し、従って流入排気のリーンの度合を低くすればNOx吸蔵還元触媒19からNOxが放出されることになる。

【0019】一方、このときNOx 吸蔵還元触媒19への流入排気の空燃比をリッチ又は理論空燃比にすると、この排気中には図2からわかるように多量のHC, COが含まれ、この多量のHC, COは白金Pt上の酸素O2・又はO2・と反応して酸化せしめられる。また、流入排気の空燃比をリッチ又は理論空燃比にすると流入排気中の酸素濃度が低下するために吸収剤からNO2が放出され、このNO2は図3(B)に示されるようにHC, COと反応して還元せしめられる。このようにして白金Ptの表面上にNO2が存在しなくなると吸収剤から次から次へとNO2が放出され、還元される。

【0020】図1の内燃機関では次式に基づいて燃料噴射時間TAUが算出される。

 $TAU = TB \cdot KK \cdot (AFS/AFT)$

ここで Γ B は基本燃料噴射時間、 K K は補正係数、 A F S は理論空燃比(= 14.6)、 A F T は目標空燃比を それぞれ表している。 基本燃料噴射時間 Γ B は燃煙室 3

内で燃焼せしめられる混合気の空燃比を理論空燃比にするのに必要な燃料噴射時間であって予め実験により求められている。この基本燃料噴射時間TBは機関運転状態例えば機関負荷を表す吸入空気量Ga及び機関回転数Nの関数として予めROM32内に記憶されている。

【0021】補正係数KKは暖機運転時増量補正係数、加速時増量補正係数、学習補正係数などを一まとめにして表したものであり、補正する必要がないときには1.0に維持される。目標空燃比AFTは燃焼室3内で燃焼せしめられる混合気の空燃比の目標値であり、従ってNOx吸蔵還元触媒19への流入排気の空燃比の目標値を表している。AFT>AFSのときにはNOx吸蔵還元触媒19への流入排気の空燃比がリーンになり、AFT<AFSのときにはNOx吸蔵還元触媒19への流入排気の空燃比がリッチになる。

【0022】図1の内燃機関では通常運転時、目標空燃 比AFTが例えば機関運転状態に応じて定められるリー ン空燃比AFL (>AFS) に維持される。従って、機 関1から排出されるNOx がNOx 吸蔵還元触媒19内 に蓄えられることになる。ところが、NOx 吸蔵還元触 媒19のNOx 貯蔵能力には限界があるのでNOx 吸蔵 還元触媒19のNOx 貯蔵能力が飽和する前にNOx 吸 蔵還元触媒19からNOx を放出させる必要がある。そ こで本実施態様では、NOx 吸蔵還元触媒19に貯蔵さ れているNOx 量を求め、このNOx 貯蔵量が予め定め られた設定値よりも多くなったときにNOx 吸蔵還元触 媒19への流入排気の空燃比を一時的にリッチに切り換 え、それによりNOx 吸蔵還元触媒19内に蓄えられて いるNOx 放出して還元するようにしている。即ち、N Ox 吸蔵還元触媒19内のNOx を放出、還元すべきと きには目標空燃比AFTが一時的にリーン空燃比AFL からリッチ空燃比AFRに切り換えられる。

【0023】図4は目標空燃比AFTをリッチに切り換えたときのNOx 吸蔵還元触媒19への流入排気の空燃比AFI及び流出排気の空燃比AFOの変化を概略的に示す実験結果である。図4の時間aにおいてNOx 吸蔵還元触媒19のNOx 放出、還元作用を開始すべきであると判断されると、目標空燃比AFTがリッチ空燃比AFRに向けて徐々に低下せしめられ、その結果流入排気空燃比AFI及び流出排気空燃比AFOが低下する。

【0024】次いで、時間 b となると流入排気空燃比A F I が理論空燃比になり、次いでリッチになる。即ち、リーンでなくなる。一方、このとき流出排気空燃比AF Oはほぼ理論空燃比AF T に維持される。これは流入排気空燃比AF I がリーンでなくなるとNOx 吸蔵還元触媒19のNOx 放出、還元作用が実質的に始まり、NOx 吸蔵還元触媒19内においてHC, COとNOx, O2 とがほぼバランスするためであると考えられている。なお、このとき流出排気空燃比AFOがわずかばかりリッチに維持されることもある。

【0025】次いで、時間cとなると流出排気空燃比AFOがリッチになり、次いでリッチ空燃比AFRに一致するまで低下する。これはNOx吸蔵還元触媒19内にNOx,O2がほとんどなくなったためにHC,COが過剰となるからであると考えられている。従って、時間

cはNOx 放出、還元作用が完了した時間と見ることができる。

【0026】そこで、流出排気空燃比AFOがリッチになったときには目標空燃比AFTを直ちにリーン空燃比AFLに戻すようにしている。なお、図4は流出排気空燃比AFOがリッチになった後にも目標空燃比AFTをリッチ空燃比AFRに維持した場合を示しており、本実施態様の空燃比制御とは異なっている。従って、流入排気空燃比AFIがリーンでなくなってから流出排気空燃比がリッチになるまでの経過時間ETにおいて、NOx吸蔵還元触媒19のNOx放出、還元作用が実質的に行われていると考えることができる。

【0027】一方、NOx 吸蔵還元触媒19のNOx 貯蔵量を直接求めることはできない。しかしながら、NO x 吸蔵還元触媒19に流入するNOx 量の積算値はNO x 貯蔵量を表している。そこで本実施態様では、NOx 吸蔵還元触媒19に単位時間当たり流入するNOx 量Q Nを求め、このNOx 量QNの積算値SQNが予め定められた設定値よりも大きくなったときにNOx 吸蔵還元触媒19のNOx 放出、還元作用を開始するようにしている。

【0028】ところで、NOx 吸蔵還元触媒19を使用するにつれてNOx 吸蔵還元触媒19が劣化し、その結果NOx 吸蔵還元触媒19のNOx 貯蔵作用が低下する。一方、NOx 吸蔵還元触媒19内のNOx 貯蔵量が少なくなるにつれてNOx 放出、還元作用に必要な時間が短くなる。従って、上述の経過時間ETが予め定められた基準値REFよりも短くなったときにはNOx 吸蔵還元触媒19の劣化度合いが予め定められた設定度合いよりも大きくなったと判断することができる。

【0029】ところが、冒頭で述べたように経過時間ETはNOx 吸蔵還元触媒19のNOx 放出、還元作用時又はNOx 放出、還元作用開始時における機関運転状態又はNOx 吸蔵還元触媒19の状態に応じて変動しうる。このことについて図5及び図6を参照して詳細に説明する。NOx 吸蔵還元触媒19のNOx 放出、還元作用を行うべく目標空燃比AFTのリッチ空燃比AFRへの変更作用が開始されたときのNOx 吸蔵還元触媒19のNOx 貯蔵量、並びに三元触媒16及びNOx 吸蔵還元触媒19のNOx 貯蔵量をそれぞれSQNR、SQOXRとし、NOx 吸蔵還元触媒19への流入排気の空燃比AFIがリーンの状態からリーンでない状態に切り替わったときの触媒温度及び吸入空気量をそれぞれTCR、GaRとし、NOx 放出、還元作用時におけるリッチ空 燃比をAFTRとすると、図5 (A) はTCRと経過時

憶されている。

間ETとの関係を、図5(B)はSQNRと経過時間E Tとの関係を、図5 (C) はAFRRと経過時間ETと の関係を、図6(A)はGaRと経過時間ETとの関係 を、図6(B)はSQOXRと経過時間ETとの関係を それぞれ示している。

【0030】図5(A)からわかるように、経過時間E Tは触媒温度TCRが低いときにはTCRが低くなるつ れて短くなり、触媒温度TCRが高いときにはTCRが 高くなるつれて短くなる。これはNOx 吸蔵還元触媒1 9のNOx 吸蔵能力が触媒温度に依存しており、NOx 吸蔵能力が低くなると放出、還元すべきNOx 量が少な くなるために経過時間ETが短くなるためであると考え

【0031】また、図5(B)からわかるように、経過 時間ETはNOx 貯蔵量SQNRが大きくなるにつれて 長くなる。これはNOx 吸蔵量が多くなると放出、還元 すべきNOx 量が多くなるために経過時間ETが長くな るためであると考えられている。さらに、図5 (C) か らわかるように、経過時間ETはリッチ空燃比AFRR が小さくなるにつれて短くなる。これはリッチ空燃比が 小さくなるにつれてNOx 吸蔵還元触媒19に単位時間 当たりに供給される還元剤即ちHC、COの量が多くな るからであると考えられている。

【0032】さらに、図6(A)からわかるように、経 過時間ETは吸入空気量GaRが多くなるにつれて短く なる。これは吸入空気量が多くなるにつれてNOx 吸蔵 還元触媒19に単位時間当たりに供給されるHC,CO の量が多くなるからであると考えられている。さらに、 図6(B)からわかるように、経過時間ETは酸素貯蔵 量SQOXRが多くなるにつれて長くなる。これは酸素 貯蔵量が多くなるにつれて、NOx 放出、還元作用に使 用されることなく消費されるHC、CO量が増大するた めであると考えられている。

【0033】このように経過時間は変動しうる。従っ て、NOx 流入量積算値SQNが設定値よりも大きくな ったということでNOx 吸蔵還元触媒19のNOx 放 出、還元作用を開始し、このとき経過時間ETが基準値 REFよりも短くなったということでNOx 吸蔵還元触 媒19の劣化度合いが設定度合いよりも大きくなったと 判断すると、誤判断することになる。

【0034】そこで、上述のTCR, SQNR, AFR R, GaR, SQOXRに基づき経過時間ETを補正 し、補正後の経過時間CETが基準値REFよりも短く なったときにNOx 吸蔵還元触媒19の劣化度合いが設 定度合いよりも大きくなったと判断するようにしてい る。具体的には、補正後の経過時間CETは次式により 算出される。

[0035]

 $CET = ET \cdot KT \cdot KN \cdot KR \cdot KG \cdot KOX$

正係数、KRはリッチ空燃比補正係数、KGは吸入空気 量補正係数、KOXは酸素貯蔵量補正係数をそれぞれ表 している。触媒温度補正係数KTは図7(A)に示され るように、触媒温度TCRが低いときにはTCRが低く なるつれて大きくなり、触媒温度TCRが高いときには TCRが高くなるつれて大きくなる。この補正係数KT は図7(A)に示すマップの形で予めROM32内に記

【0036】NOx 吸蔵量補正係数KNは図7(B)に 示されるように、NOx 貯蔵量SQNRが大きくなるに つれて小さくなる。この補正係数KNは図7(B)に示 すマップの形で予めROM32内に記憶されている。リ ッチ空燃比補正係数KRは図7(C)に示されるよう に、リッチ空燃比AFRRが小さくなるにつれて大きく なる。この補正係数KRは図7(C)に示すマップの形 で予めROM32内に記憶されている。

【0037】吸入空気量補正係数KGは図8(A)に示 されるように、吸入空気量GaRが多くなるにつれて大 きくなる。この補正係数KGは図8(A)に示すマップ の形で予めROM32内に記憶されている。酸素貯蔵量 補正係数KOXは図8 (B) に示されるように、酸素貯 蔵量SQOXRが多くなるにつれて小さくなる。この補 正係数KGは図8(B)に示すマップの形で予めROM 32内に記憶されている。

【0038】このように補正後の経過時間CETを用い ることによりNOx 吸蔵還元触媒19の劣化度合いを正 確に判断することができる。図9及び図10は目標空燃 比AFTの算出ルーチンを示している。このルーチンは 予め定められた設定時間毎の割り込みによって実行され る。図9及び図10を参照すると、まずステップ50で はフラグがセットされているか否かが判別される。この フラグはNOx 吸蔵還元触媒19のNOx 放出、還元作 用を行うべきときにセットされ、それ以外はリセットさ れるものである。フラグがリセットされているときには 次いでステップ51に進み、リーン空燃比AFLが算出 される。リーン空燃比AFLは例えば機関負荷を表す吸 入空気量Ga、機関回転数N、目標空燃比AFTがリー ン空燃比AFLに切り換えられてからの時間の関数とし て予め定められている。続くステップ52ではこのAF Lが目標空燃比AFTとされる。

【0039】続くステップ53では単位時間当たりにN Ox 吸蔵還元触媒19に流入するNOx 量QNが算出さ れる。単位時間当たりの流入NOx 量QNは吸入空気量 Gaが多くなるにつれて多くなり、機関回転数Nが高く なるにつれて多くなるので、例えば吸入空気量Ga及び 機関回転数Nに基づいて単位時間当たりの流入NOx量 QNを求めることができる。続くステップ54では流入 QN)。続くステップ55では単位時間当たりに機関1 ここでKTは触媒温度補正係数、KNはNOx 吸蔵量補 50 から排出される酸素量QOXが算出される。単位時間当

たりの排出酸素量QOXは吸入空気量Gaが多くなるにつれて多くなり、リーン空燃比AFLが大きくなるにつれて多くなるので、例えば吸入空気量Ga及びリーン空燃比AFLに基づいて単位時間当たりの排出酸素量QOXを求めることができる。続くステップ56では排出酸素量積算値SQOXが算出される(SQOX=SQOX+QOX)。この排出酸素量積算値SQOXは三元触媒17及びNOx吸蔵還元触媒19内に貯蔵されている酸

素量を表している。

【0040】続くステップ57では流入NOx 量積算値 10 SQNが予め定められた設定値S1よりも大きいか否か が判別される。SQN≦S1のときには処理サイクルを 終了する。これに対しSQN>S1のときには次いでス テップ58に進み、NOx 吸蔵還元触媒19のNOx 放 出、還元作用を行うための条件が成立しているか否かが 判別される。例えば、機関始動時、アイドリング運転 時、加速運転時には条件不成立とされ、それ以外は条件 成立とされる。条件不成立のときには処理サイクルを終 了する。条件成立のときには次いでステップ59に進 み、フラグがセットされる。続くステップ60ではリッ チ空燃比AFRが算出される。リッチ空燃比AFRは例 えば吸入空気量Ga、機関回転数N、補正後の経過時間 CETの関数として予め定められている。続くステップ 61ではこのときの流入NOx 量積算値SQNがNOx 貯蔵量SQNRとして記憶され、排出酸素量積算値SQ OXが酸素貯蔵量SQOXRとして記憶される。続くス テップ62ではSQN及びSQOXがクリアされる。次 いで処理サイクルを終了する。

【0041】フラグがセットされたときにはステップ50からステップ63に進み、目標空燃比AFTが一定値30 aだけ減少される(AFT=AFT-a)。続くステップ64では目標空燃比AFTがリッチ空燃比AFRよりも小さいか否かが判別される。AFT \ge AFRのときには処理サイクルを終了する。AFT<AFRのときには次いでステップ65に進み、AFTがAFRに一致せしめられる。従って、フラグがセットされると目標空燃比AFTがAFLから徐々に減少せしめられ、次いでAFRに維持される。フラグがリセットされると目標空燃比AFTがAFLに戻される。

【0042】なお、本実施態様では、NOx 吸蔵還元触媒19のNOx 還元、放出作用を行うためにNOx 吸蔵還元触媒19に還元剤を供給しているという見方もできる。この場合、目標空燃比AFTがリーン空燃比AFLから減少され始めてから、再びリーン空燃比AFLに戻されるまでが還元剤供給作用時ということになる。図11は経過時間ETの算出ルーチンを示している。このルーチンは予め定められた設定時間毎の割り込みによって実行される。

【0043】図11を参照すると、まずステップ70では上述のフラグがセットされているか否かが判別され

る。フラグがリセットされているときには処理サイクル を終了する。フラグがセットされているときには次いで ステップ71に進み、流入排気空燃比AFIがリーンで あるか否かが判別される。例えば、AFI>14.8の ときにリーンと判断され、AFI≦14.8のときにリ ーンでないと判断される。AFIがリーンのときには処 理サイクルを終了する。AFIがリーンでないときには 次いでステップ72に進み、前回の処理サイクルにおい て流入排気空燃比AFIがリーンであるか否かが判別さ れる。前回の処理サイクルにおいてAFIがリーンのと き、即ちAFIがリーンの状態からからリーンでない状 態に切り替わったときには次いでステップ73に進み、 このときの触媒温度TCがTCRとして、吸入空気量G aがGaRとして記憶される。次いでステップ74に進 む。これに対し、前回の処理サイクルにおいてAFIが リーンでないときにはステップ74にジャンプする。

【0044】ステップ74では経過時間ETが1だけインクリメントされる。続くステップ75では流出排気空燃比AFOがリッチであるか否かが判別される。例えば、AFO<14.4のときにリッチと判断され、AFO≧14.4のときにリッチでないと判断される。AFOがリッチでないときには次いで処理サイクルを終了する。これに対し、AFOがリッチのときには次いでステップ76に進み、このときのリッチ空燃比AFRがAFRRとして記憶される。続くステップ77ではフラグがリセットされ、続くステップ78では劣化判断ルーチンが実行される。この劣化判断ルーチンは図12に示されている。

【0045】図12を参照すると、まずステップ80で は図7 (A) のマップから触媒温度補正係数KTが算出 される。続くステップ81では図7(B)のマップから NOx 貯蔵量補正係数KNが算出され、続くステップ8 2では図8 (B) のマップから酸素貯蔵量補正係数KO Xが算出される。続くステップ83では図7(C)のマ ップからリッチ空燃比補正係数KRが算出され、続くス テップ84では図8(A)のマップから吸入空気量補正 係数KGが算出される。続くステップ85では補正され た経過時間CETが算出される(CET=ET・KT・ KN・KOX・KR・KG)。続くステップ86では補 正された経過時間CETが基準値REFよりも小さいか 否かが判別される。CET<REFのときには次いでス テップ87に進み、表示装置45が作動せしめられる。 これに対しCET≧REFのときには次いでステップ8 8に進み、表示装置45が停止せしめられる。

【0046】再び図11を参照すると、続くステップ79では経過時間ETがクリアされる。図13は燃料噴射時間TAUの算出ルーチンを示している。このルーチンは予め定められた設定時間毎の割り込みによって実行される。図13を参照すると、まずステップ90では基本50燃料噴射時間TBが算出される。続くステップ91では

補正係数KKが算出される。続くステップ92では燃料噴射時間TAUが算出される(TAU=TB・KK・AFS/AFT)。上述の実施態様では、TCR、SQNR、AFRR、GaR、SQOXRに基づき経過時間ETを補正している。しかしながら、TCR、SQNR、AFRR、GaR、SQOXRに基づき基準値REFを補正し、経過時間ETが補正後の基準値よりも短くなったときにNOx吸蔵還元触媒19の劣化度合いが設定度合いよりも大きくなったと判断することもできる。当然、両方を補正してもよい。

【0047】図14に別の実施態様を示す。図14の内燃機関はNOx吸蔵還元触媒19上流の排気管18に空燃比センサ40が取り付けられていない点で図1の内燃機関と構成を異にしている。流入排気空燃比AFIがリーンの状態からリーンでない状態に切り替わったときには、流出排気空燃比AFOもリーンの状態からリーンでない状態に切り替わる。即ち、流入排気空燃比AFIの変化は流出排気空燃比AFOを検出することにより知ることができる。そこで本実施態様ではNOx吸蔵還元触媒19上流の空燃比センサを省略し、NOx吸蔵還元触媒19下流の空燃比センサ41により流入排気空燃比AFIがリーンの状態からリーンでない状態に切り替ったか否かを判断するようにしている。

【0048】一方、上述したように、機関運転状態又は NOx 吸蔵還元触媒19の状態に応じて経過時間ETは 変動しうるので、異なる状態における経過時間ETを比較することは無意味ということになる。従って、同じ状態における経過時間ETを比較すればNOx 吸蔵還元触媒19の劣化度合いを正確に判断できることになる。そこで本実施態様では、機関運転状態又はNOx 吸蔵還元 30 触媒19の状態が予め定められた設定状態であるときの経過時間ETに基づいてNOx 吸蔵還元触媒19の劣化度合いを判断するようにしている。言い換えると、機関運転状態又はNOx 吸蔵還元触媒19の状態が設定状態でないときにはNOx 吸蔵還元触媒19の劣化度合いの判断を禁止しているということになる。

【0049】具体的には、触媒温度TCRが予め定められた設定範囲内にあり、かつNOx貯蔵量SQNRが予め定められた設定範囲内にあり、かつリッチ空燃比AFRRが予め定められた設定範囲内にあり、かつ吸入空気量GaRが予め定められた設定範囲内にあり、かつ酸素貯蔵量SQOXRが予め定められた設定範囲内にあるときには、NOx吸蔵還元触媒19の劣化度合いが判断される。いずれか一つが設定範囲外のときにはNOx吸蔵還元触媒19の劣化度合いの判断は行われない。

【0050】図15は本実施態様における経過時間ETの算出ルーチンを示している。このルーチンは予め定められた設定時間毎の割り込みによって実行される。なお、本実施態様においても図9及び図10に示される目標空燃比AFTの算出ルーチンと、図13に示される燃 50

料噴射時間TAUの算出ルーチンとが実行される。図1 5を参照すると、まずステップ170では上述のフラグ がセットされているか否かが判別される。フラグがリセ ットされているときには処理サイクルを終了する。フラ グがセットされているときには次いでステップ171に 進み、流入排気空燃比AFIがリーンであるか否かが判 別される。例えば、流出排気空燃比AFO>14.8の ときにリーンと判断され、AFO≦14.8のときにリ ーンでないと判断される。AFIがリーンのときには処 理サイクルを終了する。AFIがリーンでないときには 次いでステップ172に進み、前回の処理サイクルにお いて流入排気空燃比AFIがリーンであるか否かが判別 される。前回の処理サイクルにおいてAFIがリーンの ときには次いでステップ173に進み、このときの触媒 温度TCがTCRとして、吸入空気量GaがGaRとし て記憶される。次いでステップ174に進む。前回の処 理サイクルにおいてAFIがリーンでないときにはステ

【0051】ステップ174では経過時間ETが1だけインクリメントされ、続くステップ175では流出排気空燃比AFOがリッチであるか否かが判別される。例えば、AFO<14.4のときにリッチと判断され、AFO≧14.4のときにリッチでないと判断される。AFOがリッチでないときには次いで処理サイクルを終了する。これに対し、AFOがリッチのときには次いでステップ176に進み、このときのリッチ空燃比AFRがAFRRとして記憶される。続くステップ177ではフラグがリセットされ、続くステップ178では図16に示される劣化判断ルーチンが実行される。

ップ174にジャンプする。

【0052】図16を参照すると、まずステップ180 では触媒温度TCRが設定範囲内にあるか否かが判別さ れる。TCRが設定範囲内にあるときには次いでステッ プ181に進み、NOx 貯蔵量SQNRが設定範囲内に あるか否かが判別される。SQNRが設定範囲内にある ときには次いでステップ182に進み、酸素貯蔵量SQ OXRが設定範囲内にあるか否かが判別される。SQO XRが設定範囲内にあるときには次いでステップ183 に進み、リッチ空燃比AFRRが設定範囲内にあるか否 かが判別される。AFRRが設定範囲内にあるときには 次いでステップ184に進み、吸入空気量GaRが設定 範囲内にあるか否かが判別される。GaRが設定範囲内 にあるときには次いでステップ185に進み、経過時間 ETが基準値REFよりも小さいか否かが判別される。 ET<REFのときには次いでステップ186に進み、 表示装置45が作動せしめられる。これに対しET≥R EFのときには次いでステップ187に進み、表示装置 45が停止せしめられる。一方、TCR, SQNR, S QOXR, AFRR, GaRのうちいずれか一つが設定 範囲外にあるときにもステップ187に進む。

【0053】再び図15を参照すると、続くステップ1

1:

79では経過時間ETがクリアされる。これまで述べてきた実施態様では、燃焼室3内で燃焼せしめられる混合気の空燃比をリッチにすることにより、NOx 吸蔵還元触媒19への流入排気の空燃比がリッチになるようにしている。しかしながら、機関膨張行程又は排気で程に2回目の燃料噴射を行うことにより流入排気空燃比がリッチになるようにすることもできる。或いは、排気管18に還元剤供給装置を設け、この還元剤供給装置から還元剤を供給することにより流入排気空燃比がリッチになるようにしてもよい。この場合、還元剤として例えばガソリン、イソオクタン、ヘキサン、ヘプタン、軽油、灯油、ブタン、プロパンのような炭化水素、水素、アンモニア、尿素などを用いることができる。

【0054】また、これまで述べてきた実施態様では、 NOx 吸蔵還元触媒 19への流入排気の空燃比AFIが リーンの状態からリーンでない状態に切り替わったときを経過時間ETの開始時間としている。しかしながら、流入排気空燃比AFIがリッチでない状態からリッチの 状態に切り替わったときを経過時間ETの開始時間とすることもできる。この場合、例えば、AFI<14.420のときにリッチと判断され、AFI ≥ 14.40 ときに リッチでないと判断される。

[0055]

【発明の効果】NOx 吸蔵還元触媒の劣化度合いを正確 に判断することができる。

【図面の簡単な説明】

【図1】内燃機関の全体図である。

【図2】 燃焼室から排出される排気中の代表的な成分の 濃度を概略的に示す図である。

【図3】NOx 吸蔵還元触媒のNOx 吸放出・還元作用 30

を説明する図である。

【図4】流入排気空燃比AFI及び流出排気空燃比AFOを示す線図である。

【図5】経過時間ETの変化を示す線図である。

【図6】経過時間ETの変化を示す線図である。

【図7】補正係数を示す線図である。

【図8】補正係数を示す線図である。

【図9】目標空燃比AFTの算出ルーチンを示すフローチャートである。

10 【図10】目標空燃比AFTの算出ルーチンを示すフローチャートである。

【図11】経過時間ETの算出ルーチンを示すフローチャートである。

【図12】劣化判断ルーチンを示すフローチャートである。

【図13】燃料噴射時間TAUの算出ルーチンを示すフローチャートである。

【図14】別の実施態様における内燃機関の全体図である。

20 【図15】別の実施態様における経過時間ETの算出ルーチンを示すフローチャートである。

【図16】別の実施態様における劣化判断ルーチンを示すフローチャートである。

【符号の説明】

1…機関本体

3…燃焼室

15…排気マニホルド

19…NOx 吸蔵還元触媒

40,41…空燃比センサ

【図2】

【図3】

図 2

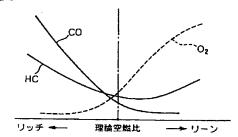
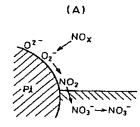
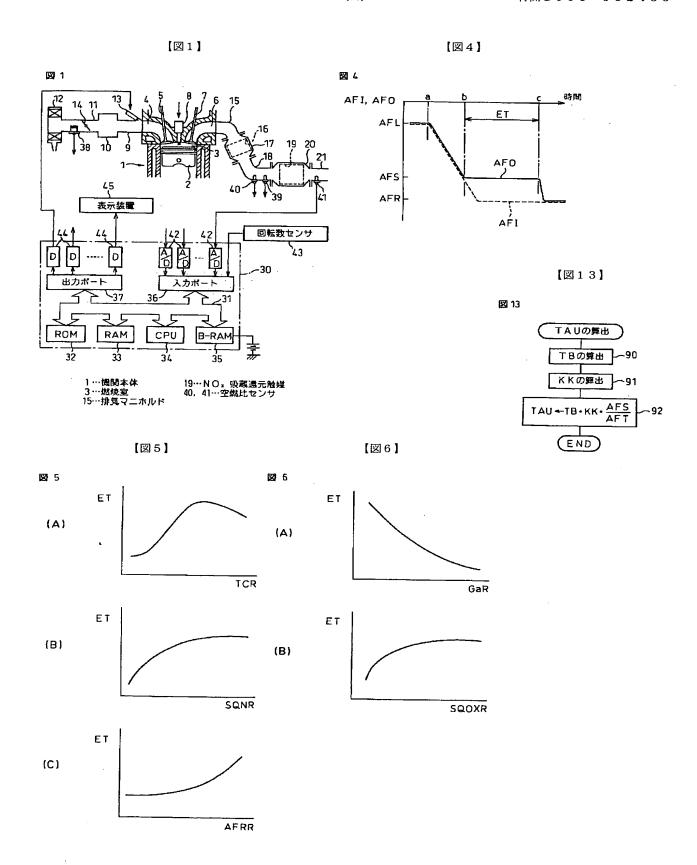
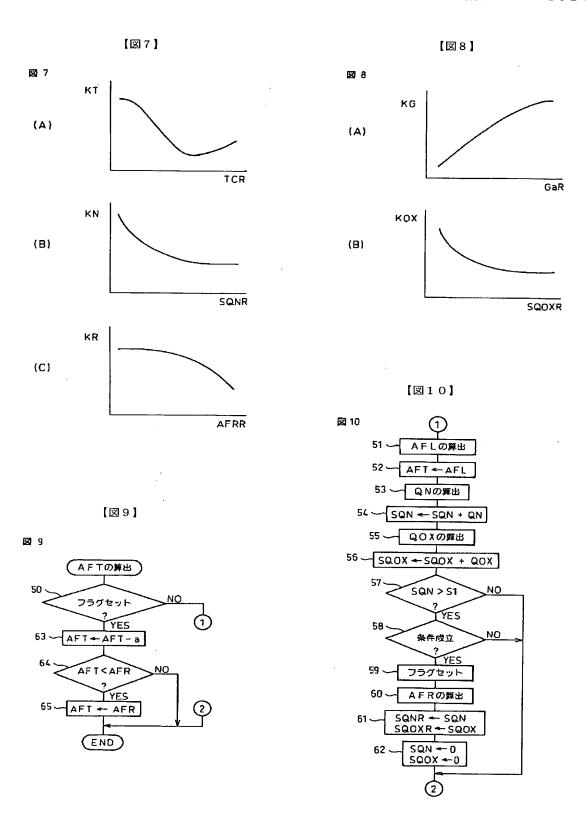


図 3

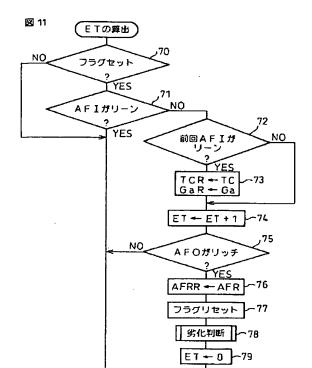


(B)

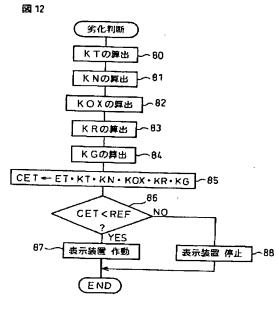






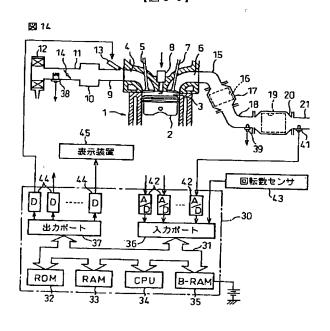


【図12】

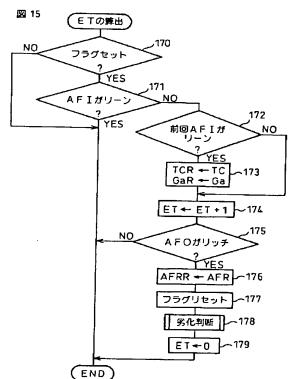


【図14】

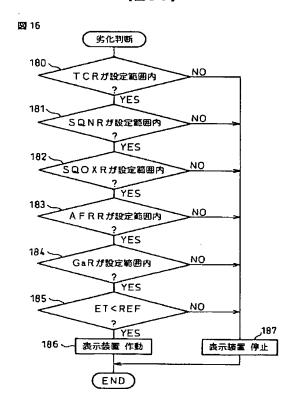
(END)



【図15】



【図16】



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